

their language or teach them his?" If he shall be able to carry this out, we will all be able to agree with a cotemporary that he will furnish one of the most important contributions that have been made to our knowledge of man acquired by study of the creatures who are below the human race in racial development. He has, it is shown, a definite and comprehensive idea of the range of exploration in regard to animals which can be brought within his reach, and he has provided seemingly for every emergency that may arise. He has applied nearly all the latest achievements of science, within the scope of his plans, to the advancement of his expedition. He will use the electric battery and the electric lighting, as well as the camera and the phonograph and the telephone to increase his opportunities to see things to advantage, and he will even apply electricity for the purpose of placing animals within his reach. In the meantime he will be provided with a cage in which he can insulate himself and protect his property in an emergency, an invention which is declared worthy of a born New Englander, and all his arrangements show that whatever the African forests have to furnish us in the way of information upon the animal world and the connection of human with animal speech, will be within the scope of his inventive genius and personal energy. "Never before," says the Boston *Herald*, "has a man proposed to bury himself in the wilds of Africa to the same extent with so intelligent a scientific purpose or with so adequate an equipment for carrying out his plans. He seems to have anticipated everything that was needed, and his plan is so novel and interesting that the results of his expedition will be eagerly awaited."

It should be remembered that Prof. Garner is in a part of the world where communication with another part of it is utterly out of the question most of the time if not all of it; so that, whether his expedition will be crowned with a successful outcome and something concerning our "next of kin" of which we are at present in ignorance be imparted to the human family, or the reverse, we will not be likely to know until he returns. Then we will know it all at once, in one lesson so to speak.

SPECULATING ON THE UNKNOWABLE

Professor Hall, of the naval observatory at Washington, is said to be unable to account for the sudden development of popular interest in the subject of the planet Mars and the beings who are presumed to inhabit it. [The New York *World* seeks to make an explanation in the fact that a good many people believe there is a possible connection between the comet and the planet named. We have all heard of the belief entertained and expressed by some of the earth's scientific men that the inhabitants of Mars, or some of them, have for years been endeavoring to arrest our attention and establish sympathetic if not intelligible communication between the two planetary neighbors; and we are now advised of the thought entertained by many that, "failing to attract the attention of the inhabitants of the earth by means of

the elaborate system of signals hung out last summer, the highly cultivated canal-digging residents of the red planet may have fired off the comet as a parting shot. However this may be, the fact remains that the opposition of Mars had been going on for several months without attracting any attention until the *World's* astronomer pointed out the mystery surrounding its three lights and other seeming signals, as seen through the Lick telescope."

There are some things which the clown knows as well as the sage, some effects the cause of which are no less a sealed book to the devotee of science than to the "mind uncorrupted by books;" one of these subjects is what a comet (especially the alleged one now in or near the solar system) is, what it is for and from whence it came. That they are interstellar wanderers is understood; but whether they are fragments of some far-away factor in the celestial economy or whether they are aggregations of meteoric matter resplendent in their own glow or are opaque and like our moon borrow their brilliancy from the sun, we know not and may never know. What the use, what the purpose of a comet is a mystery; but to say that it has no purpose is to cast a reflection upon Infinity.

ANCIENT ROME REDIVIVUS.

The spectacle that was presented at the Coney Island Athletic club last night was one to make considerate men think for a time that the wheels of civilization have been turned back a few hundred years and we are again face to face with the gladiatorial arena which filled the savage-souled Romans with delight. In the name of "sport" a few thousand men assemble at that well-known resort and pay exorbitant prices for the privilege of witnessing one of the bloodiest, most brutal and blackguard exhibitions of modern times, and the law not only does not interfere with the disgusting business but actually licenses it. The sensation imparted by reading the details is emphasized by the announcement that the "smell of warm, fresh blood" at the end of the first round set the audience wild with delight—just as it used to the patricians who witnessed the struggle between the gladiators in the Roman amphitheatre and who could scarcely contain themselves when at last one of the combatants, drunk with wounds, staggered and fell to the gory ground to rise no more. Truly, these scenes do stir a cultivated man to his depths! And the fact that the smell of human blood has still the old-time stimulation for those whose senses such effluvia and the cause of it are abundant, that they do not turn from it in dismay but linger for more and howl with delight over the brutal business, does but show that the advancement we have made is after all, in the absence of restraint, the merest fiction. Given the same opportunities that the ancients had, and how long would it be before we would be reading notices of "fights to a finish" in which one or both of the contestants were slaughtered in the ring and expired in a pool of blood! As a matter of fact,

men have quite frequently been killed in prize fights, yet—perhaps as another evidence that we are retrograding—the punishment is always very light where any is inflicted at all, which is not every time the offense occurs by any means.

Against boxing with gloves as a scientific and athletic pastime, when engaged in with moderation and without ill-feeling, there is nothing to be said; even exhibitions in which such contests are a feature need not be objectionable on that account. But when gloves are used simply because the wording of the law is such that the contestants will not be allowed to combat without them, and they are made so hard and so light that they are even worse than the bare fists, the law is not only set aside but made a mockery; and when to this is added an utter disregard for skill and each goes in to wear the other out in a hurry by means of brute force, pounding, hammering, battering and punching, it is time to call a halt on the whole business. Given a certain latitude, the pugilistic fraternity have taken all they ever had before and more too, certainly all in the way of brutality and ferocity that the most savage disposition in any age could demand; and such was the fight as described in New York last night.

The disposition in mankind, or a portion of it, to evade prescribed regulations and go back to forbidden customs and thus cultivate anew the merely animal instincts which have been held in repression by force and moral suasion united for half a thousand years, is now so manifest that the authorities will be justified in putting an end to boxing exhibitions altogether. Those who delight in barbaric pastimes had better be controlled while yet they are controllable.

THE PARKHURST SENSATION.

There is a fight on in New York city between Rev. Dr. Parkhurst and Police Superintendent Byrnes, and, to use the somewhat hackneyed words of Sir Lucius O'Trigger, "it's a very pretty quarrel as it stands." The doctor is the pastor of a fashionable church in Gotham and also president of the society for the suppression of vice; in this latter capacity he has been making the rounds of the dens, dives and resorts of the metropolis, dragging dark and forbidden deeds from their recesses and exposing them to the light of the noonday sun. He is perhaps animated by the purpose of curtailing if he cannot suppress, and understands that "showing up" is a means of repression, if not of reform, as effective as any that can be employed. Particularly among the fallen women, to enumerate whom in New York would require a great row of figures, has the doctor been laboring; and if none of them have turned away from their loathsome vocation, it has not been for want of such reformatory incentive as exposure may produce.

The chief of the constabulary now shows that he can wield a pen as well as a locust, and he comes back at the doctor in a trenchant and incisive manner for some of the latter's reflections upon him and his administration of police powers. He thinks Rev. Park-